



# Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts

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## [Editor's Note]

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Biographies tell us stories about people, young and old, famous and infamous, long past and brand new. Many of us are drawn to them for the life lessons shared, the insights gained, or merely for the juicy events of the person's life. Whatever the reason or story, biographies can be genuinely good reads. We each have our own story to tell. In fact, we have multiple stories that make up who we are on many levels both personally and professionally.

Just recently, my graduate students completed their Literacy Histories. In this assignment, they did an "autobiographical dig" into their literate past finding evidence of how they learned to read, what they liked to read, and, following this journey throughout their life, they then reflected on what all of it means to them today as teachers of literacy. They wove all of this into elegant literacy autobiographies. In essence, they told their stories of becoming not only literate people, but educators who helped others become literate themselves. Having learned much about themselves and their classmates, their comments ranged from the personal, "I had forgotten how much I hated Popcorn reading," to the more professional, "Reading everyone's Literacy History reminded me of how each person learns to read differently." We all agreed that digging into our literate past and telling our own stories was indeed a learning experience.

In this issue of *Reading Horizons* you will find stories of students from many cultures. While not true biographies in form, the authors nonetheless teach us about students they have worked with and learned from. Jacqueline Lynch and colleagues explore the literacy activities of culturally diverse families and share the stories of multiple families and how they support the literacy of their young children. The authors visited homes to videotape parents reading to their children and analyzed the many different interactions around the reading of a book. Mona W. Matthews and John E. Kesner take us into the lives of young children, birth to age five, as



they explore the place of caregivers and other significant adults, such as teachers, in their early literacy experiences. The authors studied these relationships, discovering how they often lay the foundation for literacy learning and offer suggestions on how educators can enhance the relational aspect of early literacy. Barbara C. Palmer and her colleagues tell the story of Hakan, a fifth grade Turkish student who, as an English Language Learner (ELL) both struggles and delights in the figurative language of English. Hakan's story shows the importance and power of language and how it can so easily be misconstrued. As he plays with the common phrase, "easy come, easy go," the reader may begin to understand how vital a reader's background knowledge is to creating meaning.

Reintroducing us to biographies in their truer form, Terrell A. Young and Barbara A. Ward highlight many biographies that have recently been published. For example, the reader will learn about Alice, the strong-willed daughter of President Theodore Roosevelt and Wangari Maathai who, determined to honor her homeland, led an effort to plant millions of trees in Kenya. As usual, Young and Ward bring us many of the best books in this chosen genre.

And so stories go on. Lives are lived, some are documented and turned into fascinating biographies. The story of *Reading Horizons* continues to be told and that story is changing. With this issue, Volume 48 is completed and I want to personally thank you for your patience in this time of transition. Two changes will be made with Volume 49 which I highlight below.

- *Reading Horizons*, while continuing to be a quarterly journal, will change publication dates. The issues will now follow the seasons as we will publish in the fall (September/October), winter (December/January), spring (March/April), and summer (June/July). It is my hope that this will make the publication and delivery of the journal a more timely and consistent process.



- The *Reading Horizons* website will shortly be updated providing information to our readers and potential authors. Included on the website will be a selection of past articles in pdf format. More information on that will follow.

It is our hope that all of us, as a community of literacy learners, will remain supportive of this journal as it continues to grow and change. We hope you spread the word about the journal to your colleagues and they subscribe, expanding our readership. We encourage you to submit manuscripts for possible publication so our knowledge base can grow. The biography of *Reading Horizons* is ever-changing and we look forward to your research and your stories becoming a part of our story.

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